

**Linda Clair**  
**Five-day Meditation Retreat**  
**Kallara Conference Centre, Australia – June 2019**  
**Transcription from Audio Recordings**

**File 6b – Thursday morning discussion session**

Question: I remember you talking about being taught the counting in Japan and that also there was another meditation – you would hear the monks walking and saying “mu.”

Linda: Well, the counting was just as we do the counting, and the mu is just a mantra, “This, this.” Usually it was silent and it was just on the final evening of a retreat that they’d all suddenly start shouting it. I didn’t know that was going to happen. It was probably about fifteen, twenty minutes. They’d be hoarse the next day. Whoever’s practice was mu would be yelling it at the top of their voices. I don’t know why some people had that and other people the counting.

Question: I wanted to ask about self-delusion, because it’s about trusting what’s going on in myself, without thinking. What’s happening is noticing, particularly the last few days, that there’s thinking and then there’s the belly. There’s thinking and belly, almost like breathing in there’s thinking and breathing out it’s down in the belly. Up and down, a lot of movement. And lots of experiences, lots of sensations, lots of thoughts, lots of stillness, lots of being in the belly – it’s sort of all happening. What I want to clarify, moving out of the retreat, is where the mind, the ego, appropriates experience somewhere. I’ve been having lots of experience but nothing I can hang on to.

Linda: Good, good.

Question: It’s about trusting myself I think.

Linda: It’s really hard to do when the mind is still quite there, has still got quite a hold. So you never know really. What I used to do, if I felt something really strongly in my body it was like, “Aha!” Like the thing about going to Japan – someone said once, “He takes Western students,” and something in me in my gut just went, “I’ve got to go.” I just felt it in my body, there was no real thought involved.

But leading up to realisation the mind is going to come and go and sometimes it will be stronger than others. And with any experience you just see it as an experience. You don’t push it away but you see that it does have a start and it does have an end. Any experience does – that’s the definition of an experience. So it’s not reality. It’s very tempting when something does come and go to latch on to it and say, “Oh, this is it.” But if it goes you can’t even say I’ve had a taste of enlightenment because that’s not what it is. But it doesn’t mean that it’s not significant. Everything that’s happening is significant. The most significant thing is how you deal with it, not really what’s happening. But don’t worry too much about the delusion, it will come and go. But it’s one of the reasons to have a teacher to just keep you on track and not too put off by all the thoughts and delusions that will come up. So that’s one of my

roles, to keep you on track. If you suddenly get incredibly off track I'll just say, "Come back." And you will know too, usually. Usually you know when it gets too out of hand. I'd say don't worry about it.

With the breathing it is a bit like that. Like you're breathing in the new, breathing out the old – I used to feel that. With the breathing too, the way I breathe is in through the nose and as I breathe out it's almost like – I know it's impossible to breathe out through the belly but that's how it feels. So I'm usually not even aware of the breath coming out through the nose because I'm so firmly in the belly. So use that – it's not visualising or anything like that, it's this feeling of the breath coming out of the belly.

Question: Feels like an emptying.

Linda: And it is. That's what happens. So use the breath and don't worry too much. When you see that you are deluded just let it humble you and keep going.

Question: Yea, cause there's a lot of excitement going on.

Linda: And feel that!

Question: And then bringing it back to the belly. Because what my mind would love to do with it is go, "Weeee," and have fun with it. But it's the work of coming back and bringing that down.

Linda: Yes, ground everything, but get excited. This is incredibly exciting when you realise maybe this is possible for me. It's like that excitement keeps you going too, so keep fuelling that with your practice, with things like this. Fuel that burning excitement that starts to happen.

Question: Yes, it's felt like a white heat this time.

Linda: So you have to keep stoking the fire, and that's what things like retreats will do. And in between retreats it will still be there, but something like this will really keep it going.

Question: I appreciate your encouragement so much, and it helps me be braver too.

Linda: That's what my teachers did for me.

Question: All my life, and it feels like all my meditation, I've always just wanted to disappear. I've never had an anchor. I don't know if I've just not been open to hearing that up until now. So I've started that. I've always just wanted to be gone.

Linda: So how do you feel now?

Question: I feel a bit emotional having said that.

Linda: Well, maybe that's enough just to say that. Thanks.

Question: There are activities that it's easier for me to just be and there are activities that take me away. Like riding my bike to work I can be there, but something like watching Netflix I just go away. Then it turns into a binge watching and I think, "Oh, what a bad meditator."

Linda: No, just do it. You've got to have a break sometimes. (laughing) So don't worry about that.

Sometimes doing that can be a break. Balance things. You go to work, it's tiring, and then sometimes all you want to do is watch Netflix in the evening. So do it. If you binge watch, so what. There's enough depth and meaning in this so the rest of the time do things you enjoy doing like that. Don't overdo it but don't feel guilty.

Question: I just want to say how great it's been this morning to do the pack up in silence. It's been really strong – to watch the starting to interact and the bumping of universes and having a chance to see what's driving the way I react and respond and interfere and do things – it's been really great.

Linda: Oh, good.

Question: Before I came here I opened your book. It sets my intention. I always do it. And it kept opening at the same page, which is about the most difficult thing for me, which is staying in the body. And it was that statement you made about grounding yourself to the point where even the desire for enlightenment disappears. That was something I took with me and this retreat has been all about coming back to the body. You were talking yesterday about losing chunks, and as those chunks go there's a huge surge in the body. I'm so grateful you kept reminding about coming back to the body and grounding, because a few times I really had to sit here and let things settle before I got up. But I was reflecting – what happens when I get home and those energy surges come?

Linda: Well, just do the same as you're doing here. Often it's good to really accentuate the breathing. So breathe very deliberately into the belly when you are getting those surges. So breathe in, and you do breathe very deliberately at times, and then it usually ebbs and then it's softer again, and then suddenly the breath is soft. Just do what you're doing here – take it back with you.

Question: So just coming out of the retreat, in regards to a personal practice, I've always viewed meditation as a cumulative practice. I have a personal practice and I usually sit for about thirty minutes a day. But I've seen the need to put the work in this year. Obviously the more the better but is there a sweet spot?

Linda: It changes. I'd say, if you can, an hour would be good. If you're working full-time and it's really hard to do that make it forty minutes, so between forty minutes and an hour. Whenever suits you do it. Don't feel you should enjoy it or feel anything in particular. I'd say set a timer and just sit there. And you can change it around so some days longer, some shorter. But if there's something going on and you really can't sit for half an hour just sit for ten minutes. But if you do sit for a bit longer it will have more of an effect. Half an hour is good if you just want to make it your daily practice, but when you want to get into it a bit more I'd say extend it. So it's not necessarily the more the better. It does change. And when you're not sitting, particularly times when you don't need to be thinking – when you're doing

something very simple like walking, having a shower, washing dishes, cooking – really be in your body as much as possible. Use those times as practice times as well. And if you do sit a bit more it will become more natural to do that. Suddenly you'll realise you've been lost for quite a while and you'll come back to your body. It really ramps up the whole thing if you can do that during the day – do the sitting *and* be as aware as you can of your body, whatever you're doing.